

# MINING UTAH'S HERITAGE WORKBOOK NEWS



Utah Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program

January 2000

**VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT** <http://dogm.nr.state.ut.us/>

For information about Utah's natural resources and updates on current happenings.

## About the Workbook

**Mining Utah's Heritage** was designed to address and enhance portions of the core curriculum for the fourth grade. The AMR Program staff worked with the State Office of Education in developing the workbook. The abandoned mine safety video, **Utah's Abandoned Mines: Stay Out and Stay Alive!**, has been placed in each elementary school in Utah. This swift-moving video features interviews with people involved in accidents at abandoned mines. The extensive footage of abandoned mines and their hazards is a good way to introduce the workbook to your class! Check with your media center, librarian or fellow teachers. If you cannot locate a video at your school, contact Jan Morse at (801)-538-5305.

## Bats and Abandoned Mines

The state of Utah is home to 19 different bat species. Many of these bats use mines as places to sleep, raise their babies or hibernate during the winter. Bats are very sensitive mammals and are easily disturbed by humans. Prior to sealing abandoned mines, surveys are done to see which mines are being used by bats. Bat gates may be placed in those mines used by bats so they can still enter and exit their "mine homes." Gates protect people from the dangers of abandoned mines while protecting bats from humans. Please respect these gates for what they protect and for what they protect you from.

## Utah Mining Trivia

Several unique or unusual mining features and minerals occur in Utah. Below is a brief list of them:

@ Kennecott's Bingham Canyon mine, an open-pit copper mine located west of Salt Lake City, Utah, is the world's largest human-made excavation. It is so large it is visible from the Space Shuttle.

@ The Silver Reef Mining District, located north of St. George, Utah in Washington County, is one of the few places in the United States where silver was mined from sandstone.

@ Bertrandite, a mineral rich in beryllium, is mined at Spor Mountain in Juab County. This is the only operating beryllium mine in the United States. Beryllium alloys are used to build the space shuttle, airplanes and for other things that need to be made out of light-weight, strong metal.

@ Alunite, a mineral rich in aluminum and phosphate (potash), was mined west of Marysville, Utah in Piute County. It was an important deposit because the area was mined for potash between 1915 and 1920 when German exports were closed off during World War I (WWI). The alunite mines were closed at the end of WWI and then reopened during WWII because they were an important source of aluminum, which was used to build airplanes.

## Why is Mining Important to You?

Mining is an integral part of your everyday life. The slogan "if it wasn't grown, it was mined" is true. Think about all the things you use everyday: your cup is either made of clay or plastics, both of which come from materials taken from the earth. Your car, telephone, computer, your lightweight mountain bike--all couldn't be made without raw materials that come from mining. Mining can't occur without some environmental impact. But today's mining operations are required to have permits which guarantee that all the adverse impacts will be cleaned up. If we are to live the lifestyle to which we have become accustomed, mining has to happen. The current mining industry is not the same industry that created the abandoned mines which now present a serious physical safety hazard to the public. Call the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program at (801) 538-5305 for ideas about field trips, videos, or classroom activities that you can use.

## Cottonwood Wash Interagency Cleanup Project

The Cottonwood Wash Project is an exciting partnership among the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service and the Utah Division of Drinking Water. The Clean Water Act will provide much of the funding that is designated "to reclaim watersheds adversely impacted by past mining activity." During the 1950's Cottonwood Wash, a large watershed in San Juan County southwest of Blanding, was heavily explored to find uranium for use by our government during the cold war. Much earlier, Cottonwood Wash was home to Anasazi people and other Native Americans who lived there until about 1200 A.D. Many artifacts including pottery, arrowheads and cliff dwellings are visible throughout the area. Uranium was found around 1900 and some of the original ore samples used by Madame Curie in her radium experiments came from Cottonwood Wash. Now the Cottonwood Wash Partnership will combine the funds and the skills of each agency to repair damage caused by the uranium mining. Nearly 200 open mine shafts and adits will be sealed, mine waste dumps will be moved out of the stream bed and hundreds of acres of barren land will be revegetated.

**For more information about resources you can use including field trips, websites, and videos,** call or write Jan Morse, Educational Coordinator for the Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program at the Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, P.O. Box 145801, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5801. Phone 801-538-5305, E-mail [nrogm.jmorse@state.ut.us](mailto:nrogm.jmorse@state.ut.us)